



## **COMMUNICATION POLICY**

### **VISION**

Saint David's Parish School is a vibrant, inclusive, Catholic community inspired by St Mary MacKillop fostering faith and learning so as to nurture optimistic, compassionate people of the world.

### **RATIONALE**

Saint David's Parish School is committed to open, honest and timely communication in a respectful and constructive way. We believe that this will strengthen relationships, build positive partnerships and enhance the wellbeing and learning opportunities for our students.

### **PURPOSE**

The aim of this policy is to:

1. Establish clear expectations for staff and parents in the use of electronic methods of communication. This includes email, Seesaw and other communication platforms.
2. Acknowledge the potential benefits of open and easily accessed communication via electronic methods, and to also understand the possible short comings.
3. Clearly articulate the school's commitment to the positive use of electronic communication.
4. Implement a policy which ensures a safe workplace for staff and supports them to effectively balance their work and home life.

### **PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

Electronic communication is an environmentally friendly way of communication that can save time when used effectively. It is acknowledged that it is a convenience for working parents and provides an avenue for communication outside of normal school hours. As a school community we also highly value face to face and telephone communication. These forms of communication are preferred in many situations.

### **Expectations of staff and parents**

Diaries will continue to be used daily as a communication tool between home and school for Years 3-6.

When communicating electronically, staff and parents are expected to adhere to the following etiquette:

- a) Electronic communication works best when it is positive. Avoid sending negative or confrontational messages. Anything said electronically should always be something that could/would be said in person.
- b) Electronic communication should always be respectful and constructive. If it relates to a concern or problem, it should be focussed on understanding the problem and finding a solution.
- c) Electronic communication is best kept brief and informative. Issues that require a deeper level of detailed discussion should be dealt with in person or over the phone.
- d) Make sure the purpose of your message is clear. The purpose needs to be stipulated – e.g. this email is for information..... this email requires action by.....
- e) The tone or intent of electronic communication can be easily misunderstood, especially when sarcasm or humour is involved. Please be conscious of this and pick up the phone if you have a concern.
- f) Group messages have the potential to waste the time of many so please ensure they are sent just to people for whom they are relevant.
- g) When messaging a group, staff and parents must ensure they do not disclose the email address of others without permission to do so.
- h) Personal information about a third party (staff, student or parent) cannot be discussed electronically. Similarly, messages containing personal or sensitive information should not be passed on to a third party without the permission of the sender.
- i) Staff and parents are not expected to respond to electronic communication that is contentious or requires ongoing dialogue. A face-to-face meeting should be arranged in this circumstance.

## Expectations of parents

- a) Please only send non-vital messages electronically. For example, do not send a message saying that your child is not to go to OSHC that day as the teacher is unlikely to see the message during the day or the teacher may not be in class that day.
- b) Please keep all contact professional.
- c) Remember to respect staff personal time, including weekends, holidays, sick days and so on.
- d) Parents should not send messages and expect an immediate response.
- e) Please don't seek to discuss in detail your child's academic progress, learning expectations or behavioural and social issues via Seesaw. These are best addressed via email, over the phone or in person.
- f) Please remember that electronic messages are not necessarily confidential and can be subject to FOI (Freedom of Information) regulations. Confidential information should be conveyed by phone or personal contact.
- g) It is the responsibility of every parent to keep the school administration up-to-date with current email addresses, phone numbers and street addresses.
- h) It is expected that parents keep themselves well informed of school information via the school newsletter and Seesaw posts.
- i) Messages that are intended for the office staff should be sent directly to the school's email address: [info@stdavids.catholic.edu.au](mailto:info@stdavids.catholic.edu.au)
- j) Depending on the nature of the message, you may not receive an electronic reply at all as staff members will determine how best to contact parents: by electronic message, by phone, or to schedule a personal conference.

## Expectations of staff

- a) Staff will aim to reply to a parent communication within 2 working days.
- b) When a message is received from a parent that requires significant time to gather information and reply properly, the staff member should respond to acknowledge receipt of the communication and indicate when an informed response might be expected.
- c) As of 26 August 2024, all employees have the right to refuse employer or third-party contact outside of working hours as per the Right to Disconnect Legislation. Staff may still choose to respond to any work-related messages at a time of their choosing and this may be outside of school hours. There is an expectation, however, that teachers will respond to emails within 24-48 working hours of receipt.
- d) Electronic communication should not be used to discuss a sensitive issue which has not been raised by the parent or had not been previously discussed with the parent.
- e) Staff have been advised not to respond to offensive or abusive messages and should instead forward them to the Principal.
- f) When on extended leave staff will inform parents of the relevant dates.

## DATE FOR REVIEW

Implemented:	2022
Ratified by School Board:	2022
Reviewed:	2023
Next Review:	2026